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Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

Letter dated 22 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the negotiations on a protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by the Presidency of the European Union issued on 22 December 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and of its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the Presidency of the European Union on the negotiations of a protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Recalling its continuous commitment to the Ad Hoc Group negotiations of a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which was expressed through the adoption of its Common Position of 4 March 1998:

The European Union recalls that the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference welcomed the decision of the Ad Hoc Group to intensify its work with a view to completion of a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention as soon as possible before commencement of the Fifth Review Conference of States Parties.

In order to achieve this objective, the European Union believes that it will be imperative to have completed all the stages necessary to ensure that a Protocol be opened for signature prior to the Fifth Review Conference, which is to be held no later than 2001.

The European Union therefore considers that the negotiation on a Protocol should continue to be a high priority for the international community in 1999. To this end it will actively promote the work of the Ad Hoc Group, with a view to achieving substantive progress by the end of 1999, so that the Protocol can be adopted by a Special Conference of States Parties in 2000.

The Associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Associated country Cyprus and Iceland and Liechtenstein, EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.